

Building Blocks for Effective Housing Elements

Special Needs

Families and Persons in Need of Emergency Shelters

Government Code Section 65583(a)(7) requires “An analysis of any special housing needs, such as those of the elderly, persons with disabilities, large families, farmworkers, families with female heads of households, and families and persons in need of emergency shelter. The need for emergency shelter shall be assessed based on annual and seasonal need. The need for emergency shelter may be reduced by the number of supportive housing units that are identified in an adopted 10-year plan to end chronic homelessness and that either vacant or for which funding has been identified to allow construction during the planning period.”

Special needs are those associated with specific demographic or occupational groups which call for very specific program responses, such as preservation of single-room occupancy hotels or the development of units with larger bedroom counts. The statute specifically requires analysis of the special housing needs of the elderly, the disabled, female-headed households, large families, farmworkers and homeless persons and families. These special needs groups often spend a disproportionate amount of their income to secure safe and decent housing and are sometimes subject to discrimination based on their specific needs or circumstances.

In addition to the groups listed above, the analysis of special needs should also include any other group the locality deems appropriate.

I. REQUISITE ANALYSIS

A thorough analysis will assist a locality identify groups with the most serious housing needs in order to develop and prioritize responsive programs. The analysis of each special needs group must include the following:

- A quantification of the total number of persons and households in the special housing needs group, including tenure, where possible.
- A quantification and qualitative description of the need, including a description of the potential housing problems faced by the special needs groups, a description of any existing resources, and an assessment of unmet needs.
- Identification of potential program or policy options and resources to address the need.

Families and Persons In Need Of Emergency Shelters

Homelessness in California is a continuing crisis that demands the effective involvement of both the public and private sectors. California has the highest population of homeless - affecting almost one in every 100 California residents. According to recent census figures, 26 percent of the nation's homeless individuals and families live in California even though the State is home to only 12 percent of the nation's total population. Included in the State's homeless population are an estimated 90,000 children, the largest percentage of homeless children since the Great Depression.

In addition to the requisite analysis above, a thorough analysis of the special housing needs for families and persons in need of emergency shelters should include:

- An estimate or count of the daily average number of persons lacking shelter. Wherever possible, this figure should be divided into single males, single females and families (one or more adults with children) as the shelter needs of each subgroup requires differ significantly.
- As local data allows, the number of the mentally ill, developmentally disabled, substance abusers, survivors of domestic violence, and other categories of homeless considered significant by the jurisdiction.
- An inventory of the resources available including shelters, transitional housing and supportive housing units. The analysis should include the number, approximate location, and type of existing shelter beds, hotel/motel vouchers, and units of transitional housing available. Present shelter resources by type (e.g., family shelter beds, homeless adult female housing, supportive housing, transitional living units, etc.).
- Optional - The local need may be reduced by the number of supportive housing units that are identified in an adopted 10-year plan to end chronic homelessness. To be credited toward the need, these supportive housing units must be either vacant or for which funding has been identified to allow construction during the planning period.

For assistance with the analysis of the housing needs, including a discussion of resources such as existing housing, services and needs, contact local service providers such as continuum of care providers, local homeless shelter and service providers, food programs, operators of transitional housing programs, local drug and alcohol program service providers, county mental health and social service departments, local Salvation Army, Goodwill Industries, churches

and schools. Additional information on local services and needs may also be available by contacting one of 15 countywide Designated Local Boards certified by the Department's Emergency Housing and Assistance Program (see *IV. Links* for additional information).

Definitions of Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing and Supportive Housing

Emergency Shelter (per Health and Safety Code 50801): *housing with minimal supportive services for homeless persons that is limited to occupancy of six months or less by a homeless person. No individual or household may be denied emergency shelter because of an inability to pay.*

Transitional Housing (per Health and Safety Code 50675.2(h)): *buildings configured as rental housing developments, but operated under program requirements that call for the termination of assistance and recirculation of the assisted unit to another eligible program recipient at some predetermined future point in time, which shall be no less than six months.*

Supportive Housing (per Health and Safety Code 50675.14(b)): *Housing with no limit on length of stay, that is occupied by the target population as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 53260, and that is linked to onsite or offsite services that assist the supportive housing resident in retaining the housing, improving his or her health status, and maximizing his or her ability to live and, when possible, work in the community.*

Additional Information on Transitional Housing

Transitional housing programs provide extended shelter and supportive services for homeless individuals and/or families with the goal of helping them live independently and transition into permanent housing. Some programs require that the individual/family be transitioning from a short-term emergency shelter. The length of stay varies considerably by program but is generally longer than two weeks and can last up to 60 days or more. In many cases, transitional housing programs will provide services for up to two years or more. The supportive services may be provided directly by the organization managing the housing or by other public or private agencies in a coordinated effort with the housing provider. Transitional housing/shelter is generally provided in apartment style facilities with a higher degree of privacy than short-term homeless shelters; may be provided at no cost to the resident; and may be configured for specialized groups within the homeless population such as people with substance abuse problems, homeless mentally ill, homeless domestic violence victims, veterans or homeless people with AIDS/HIV.

Sample Table

The following sample table is intended to assist in organizing critical information pertaining to housing element requirements. The information provided in the table should be tailored to the jurisdiction and followed by appropriate analysis. This sample table is not intended to be a substitute for addressing the analytical requirements described in the statute.

Homeless Facilities

Facility Type	Population Served	Permanent/ Seasonal	Current Bed #	Estimated Need	Unmet Need

KEY IDEAS

II. HELPFUL HINTS

NEW LEGISLATION! [CHAPTER 633 STATUTES OF 2007 SB 2 \(CEDILLO\)](#)

Chapter 633, Statutes of 2007 considerably strengthened the requirements on zoning for emergency shelters and transitional housing, with an effective date of January 1, 2008. For example, emergency shelters must now be permitted without a conditional use permit (CUP) or other discretionary permits, and transitional housing and supportive housing are considered residential uses and must only be subject to the same restrictions that apply to the same housing types in the same zone. Also, regardless of the need, at a minimum, all jurisdictions must have a zone in place to permit at least one year-round emergency shelter without a CUP or any discretionary permit requirements. Where these requirements are not met, the housing element must include a program to identify zone(s) where emergency shelters are a permitted use, within one year from the adoption of the housing element (refer to Zoning For Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing screen for additional information).

Available Program Funds for Homeless Services

- HCD: The Department administers the federal [Emergency Shelter Grant Program](#) for non-entitlement jurisdictions statewide and the [Emergency Housing Assistance Program](#).

- [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#): The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act programs administered by HUD that award funds competitively require the development of a "Continuum of Care" system in the community where assistance is being sought
- [California Department of Mental Health: California Mental Health Services Act](#)
- [Governor's Homeless Initiative](#): A joint project of HCD, CalHFA and the Department of Mental Health, providing significant resources available through the passage of Propositions 46 and 1C housing funds and Proposition 63 mental health care funds to assist with the development of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless persons with severe mental illness.
- [California Housing Finance Agency \(CalHFA\)](#)

III. MODEL ANALYSES

[Highlighted Jurisdiction- County of Sacramento](#)

IV. LINKS

- ***Coming Soon!*** HCD's Technical Assistance Paper on SB2 addressing new statutory requirements of GC 65583(a)(4) et seq.
- [HCD: Selected Bibliography on Homeless Issues](#)
- [Listing of Local Designating Boards for HCD's Emergency Housing and Assistance Program \(EHAP\)](#)
- [State Department for Veterans Affairs](#)
- [State Department of Health, State Department of Drug and Alcohol](#)
- [The Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Homelessness Resource Center](#)
- [Listing of California Continuums of Care including a listing of participating area shelters and shelter capacities and most recent homeless survey data](#) (click on individual COCs links for specific information)
- [Listing of Continuum of Care](#) area shelters and shelter capacities and most recent data from their homeless surveys:

- [A Home For Every Californian: Final Recommendations and Report](#); California Senate Bipartisan Task Force on Homeless, Sacramento, CA: Senate Publications, 2001.
- [The Institute for the Study for Homelessness and Poverty](#) includes a step-by-step guide and useful information on jurisdictions' 10-year plans to end chronic homelessness.
- [The National Coalition for the Homeless](#)
- [The National Coalition for the Homeless - Local Resources in California](#)
- [National Law Center for Homelessness and Poverty](#)
- [National Low-Income Housing Coalition](#)
- [Corporation for Supportive Housing](#)
- [Partnership to End Long Term Homelessness](#)
- [National Center on Family Homelessness](#)
- [National Coalition for Homeless Veterans](#)
- [The National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)
- [Homes for the Homeless](#)
- [U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness](#)
- [Beyond Shelter](#)

Regional Organizations

- [Shelter Partnership, Inc.](#) is a nonprofit organization which develops resources and housing for the growing number of homeless families and individuals in Los Angeles County.
- [HomeBase](#) maintains statistical information regarding the homeless population in many Bay Area jurisdictions.